United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General discusses role of Non-Aligned Movement in aftermath of decolonization and end of east-west confrontation; calls on non-aligned countries to "help United Nations to meet enormous challenges facing it".

+ Croatia asks that question of international help for that country - "to alleviate the consequences of war" -- be considered by forthcoming session of General Assembly.

+ Security Council agrees to maintain existing deployment and staffing of United Nations Mission for Referendum for Western Sahara as proposed by Secretary-General.

+ Human Rights Subcommission adopts 21 texts on East Timor, states of emergency, rights of indigenous peoples, and other issues.

+ Ninth United Nations international non-governmental organizations meeting concludes by adopting declaration.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today that despite the era of decolonization and the "rapprochement" between the major power blocs in the world there was still a role for the Non-Aligned Movement.

Addressing the Summit of non-aligned countries in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Secretary-General said some people were inclined to believe that those changes had deprived the Non-Aligned Movement of the twin reasons for its existence. This view, he said, was mistaken; the enterprise of the Movement was constantly becoming "more topical and modern".

Neither decolonization nor the dislocation of the blocs had "erased the phenomena of power", he said. The temptation to dominate, either regionally or worldwide, remained -- and it threatened the weaker and poorer States which were still the majority in the world.

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Mr Boutros-Ghali said the principles on which the Movement was founded -- non-alignment in the east-west confrontation; support for anti-colonial struggles; non-participation in multilateral military alliances or any bilateral alliance with a super-Power, and refusal to accommodate super-Power military bases -- also buttressed the United Nations.

Calling on the Non-Aligned Movement to help the United Nations "to meet the enormous challenges facing it", the Secretary-General said he needed its support in tackling the eradication of poverty, and he cited three occasions in the coming years which would provide opportunities for working together -- next year's World Conference on Human Rights; the World Conference on Women, to be held in 1994, and then -- in the year of the next summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement -- the observance, in 1995, of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

While in Jakarta, the Secretary-General held meetings with a number of leaders attending the Summit. The President of Afghanistan , Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, requested United Nations humanitarian and technical assistance, in particular in the fields of water and electricity, where the infrastructure had been completely destroyed.

The Foreign Minister of Mozambique, Pascoal Manual Mocumbi, asked for United Nations assistance in connection with the forthcoming elections in his country; the Secretary General promised to dispatch technical specialists to Mozambique immediately to see how they might assist in the electoral process.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the Foreign Minister of Nigeria, Major-General Ike O.S. Nwachukwu, to discuss the situation in Somalia, to which Nigeria will be sending troops. They also discussed the situation in South Africa.

At a meeting with the Prime Minister of Angola, Pedro de Castro van Dunem, the Secretary-General discussed the forthcoming elections in that country and appealed to both the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) for calm during the period leading to the elections. At another meeting with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, thanked the Secretary-General for the United Nations assistance in the situation created by the influx of refugees from Myanmar and asked that more should be done to help repatriate the refugees.

The Secretary-General also met with the Tunisian Prime Minister, Hamed Karoui, to discuss the situation in Libya and the implementation of Security Council resolution 731 (1992) as well as the question of Western Sahara. In addition, the Secretary-General met twice with the Foreign Minister of Indonesia and was due to meet wiht him again probably tomorrow.

Finally, the Secretary-General met today with the Prime Minister of India, Narasimha Rac, for a discussion of a number of subjects currently before before the United Nations, in particular relating to the former Yugoslavia. Mr. Boutros-Ghali thanked the Preme Minister for the "loan" of General Satish Nambiar and praised his excellent performance as Commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR).

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Croatia has asked that the question of international help for that country - "to alleviate the consequences of war" -- should be considered by the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 27 August, the Acting Permanent Representative of Croatia, Mario Nobilo, requested the addition of a new item on the Assembly's agenda, dealing with international cooperation and assistance to his country, to facilitate its recovery.

The Croatian representative said that as a result of "aggression by Serbian insurgents and the so-called Yugoslav People's Army", his country faced three major problems: the heavy burden of human casualties, material destruction and the tide of refugees and displaced persons. The toll in human lives was estimated at 4,200 dead and 20,000 wounded. The number of missing persons had been put at more than 18,000. Material damage, he said, had been estimated in the range of 40 billion United States dollars. Communication lines had been destroyed and the railroad system had suffered extensive damage.

On the question of refugees and displaced persons, the Croatian representative said his country was carrying a tremendous economic burden. It was providing food, medical assistance and accommodation for more than 270,000 persons displaced from occupied parts of Croatia, in addition to 360,000 refugees - mostly Moslems and Croats of Bosnian citizenship -- coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina.
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The Security Council has agreed to a proposal from the Secretary-General to maintain the existing deployment and staffing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum for Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Council President Li Daoyu (China) informed the Secretary-General, in a letter dated 31 August, that his report on the situation in Western Sahara had been brought to the attention of the Council and that it shared his views on the "necessity of the parties scrupulously abiding by the cease-fire and abstaining from any provocative behaviour endangering the settlement".

The Council also expressed its hope that both parties would extend their full cooperation to the Secretary-General and the Special Representative in their efforts to achieve speedy progress in the implementation of the plan. It also strongly urged the parties themselves to make extraordinary efforts to ensure the success of the plan.

The Secretary-General last week asked his Special Representative for Western Sahara, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, to begin a new round of talks with the Government of Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO).
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In Geneva, the Human Rights Subcommission has deplored the 12 November 1991 incident at Dili in East Timor, which resulted in the deaths of civilians, including women and children, and called upon the Indonesian Government to cooperate fully with the efforts of the Secretary-General's representative.

The representative of Indonesia said his Government had cooperated with human rights organizations to investigate disappearances connected with the incident and had helped the families of the disappeared. He said the text was one-sided and did not reflect the significantly improved situation in the area.

The text on East Timor was one of 21 adopted by the Subcommission. Other texts dealt with such matters as the right to a fair trial, states of emergency, impunity of human rights violators, violations of the human rights of United Nations staff members, the privatization of prisons, the right to adequate housing, human rights and extreme poverty, and the effect of structural adjustment programmes on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

The Subcommission also acted on such questions as human rights and the environment, discrimination against HIV-infected people or people with AIDS, and the right to restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for victims of gross human rights violations.

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A three-day international meeting of non-governmental organizations concluded in Geneva on Friday, 28 August, by declaring that participants "unconditionally affirm the rights of self-determination, statehood and return of the Palestinian people".

In a Final Declaration, the Ninth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine also demanded Israel's withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Southern Lebanon, and called for the official participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the current Middle East peace process.

Participants called for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories and asked non-governmental groups dealing with the Palestine question to set up permanent monitoring and witness groups in the territories concerned to enhance public awareness and to pressure Governments to urge Israel to end the occupation.

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